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**DCS TO HOST STATEWIDE PUBLIC MEETINGS**  
**Department Seeks Community Input As Catalyst For Change**

**Nashville, TN-** Department of Children's Services Commissioner Viola P. Miller, will launch a new initiative to collect feedback from communities across the state that can be used to determine how the department can better provide services to children and families.

"The Department of Children's Services was created eight years ago to provide the best possible care for Tennessee children who are at risk of child abuse, caring for those who have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse, and helping families through foster care, adoption and treatment and rehabilitation for delinquent youth," said Miller.

"Although this department is making positive changes in the lives of families across the state each year, there is absolutely more we can be doing and ways we can do things better," Miller added. "That's why today I'm announcing a series of community forums we're hosting across the state to hear firsthand from families their perspectives on how together we can work to protect children and families. I strongly believe gathering community input and working with those we serve is a valuable and necessary step in moving this department forward."

The public forums provide an opportunity for average citizens to express their ideas and opinions and they emphasize the importance of engaging communities in the issues that pertain to the well being of children and families. Regional Administrators and Executive Directors from DCS Central Office will lead the discussions seeking the community's perspectives on what can be accomplished collaboratively to keep children safe.

Today's announcement is one of a number of initiatives Miller has developed during the last seven months to improve outcomes for families and to enhance staff performance at DCS.

Miller said soliciting community feedback is a vital part of creating quality improvement at DCS and is a significant step in the department's efforts to become a more open and transparent agency, with an improved level of accountability.

Other initiatives instituted by Miller, which are at varying stages of completion, include the creation of a course for employees entitled "Path to Excellence", which outlines core values necessary to creating positive outcomes for children and families.

She also worked to create a standardized DCS Practice Model, with the goal of establishing a more consistent child welfare practice. Among other initiatives Miller and her new senior management team have been working to develop the last seven months are child and family team meetings to ensure children and their families are involved in decision making processes and an initiative to modify the state's adoption procedures to ensure a more seamless delivery system for families.

The Department of Children's Services encourages public attendance at the attached list of community forums throughout the state. This listing can also be viewed on the DCS website at [www.state.tn.us/youth](http://www.state.tn.us/youth).

[Click Here](#) to see the DCS Community Forum Schedule

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